THE WOMAN'S
DREADNOUGHT

Published by the WORKERS' SUFFRAGE FEDERATION

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EAST LONDON WOMEN AND LORD DEVONPORT

The food deputation appointed from the public meeting held in Bow Baths, under the auspices of the W.S.F., was received by Lord Devonport on Monday, April 2nd, at Grosvenor House.

As the deputation awaited Lord Devonport in the Committee Room, a gentleman from one of the newsagencies who is giving spare-time National Service in the shape of reporting deputations, made a plan of the table with names and addresses of those sitting around it, for Lord Devonport's guidance, assuring the deputation that everything is done in businesslike style at the Food Controller's office. "You'll know when he comes in," he said, "for Lord Devonport always enters at that door." Presently the door opened and the reporter rose and bawled out "Lord Devonport" at the top of his voice like a town crier. Then Lord Devonport came in with his retinue. Having glanced at his plan he asked Miss Sylvia Pankhurst to open the proceedings. She handed him the following resolutions and memorandum:

"This meeting views with concern the growing acute scarcity of food and the appallingly high prices, and demands that (1) private trading in food shall cease, and that the food supply shall be administered by the town and county councils, which shall use the existing shops as distributing agencies, paying the owners and employees of such shops a suitable salary on the lines of the system adopted by the Belgian Relief Commission; (2) that to ensure a sufficiency of food supply for every family, a rationing system be introduced, and that not merely the staple foods of poor people, but all kinds and qualities of food shall be included and distributed according to their caloric value; (3) that peace negotiations be entered into as speedily as possible, for as long as War continues the food scarcity is bound to increase; (4) that all the adult men and women of the country be enfranchised without delay."

"We urge that there should be:

"1. National buying for the civilian population as there is for the military population. We suggest that this should be done by a Commission containing representatives of the local governing bodies, Trade Unions and women's working-class organisations.

"2. County councils to control flour, milling, food preserving, etc., which are carried on on a wholesale scale, paying the miller or manufacturer a salary for managing the business and the workers at a trade union rate. County councils to be empowered to open mills, etc., on their own account where necessary.

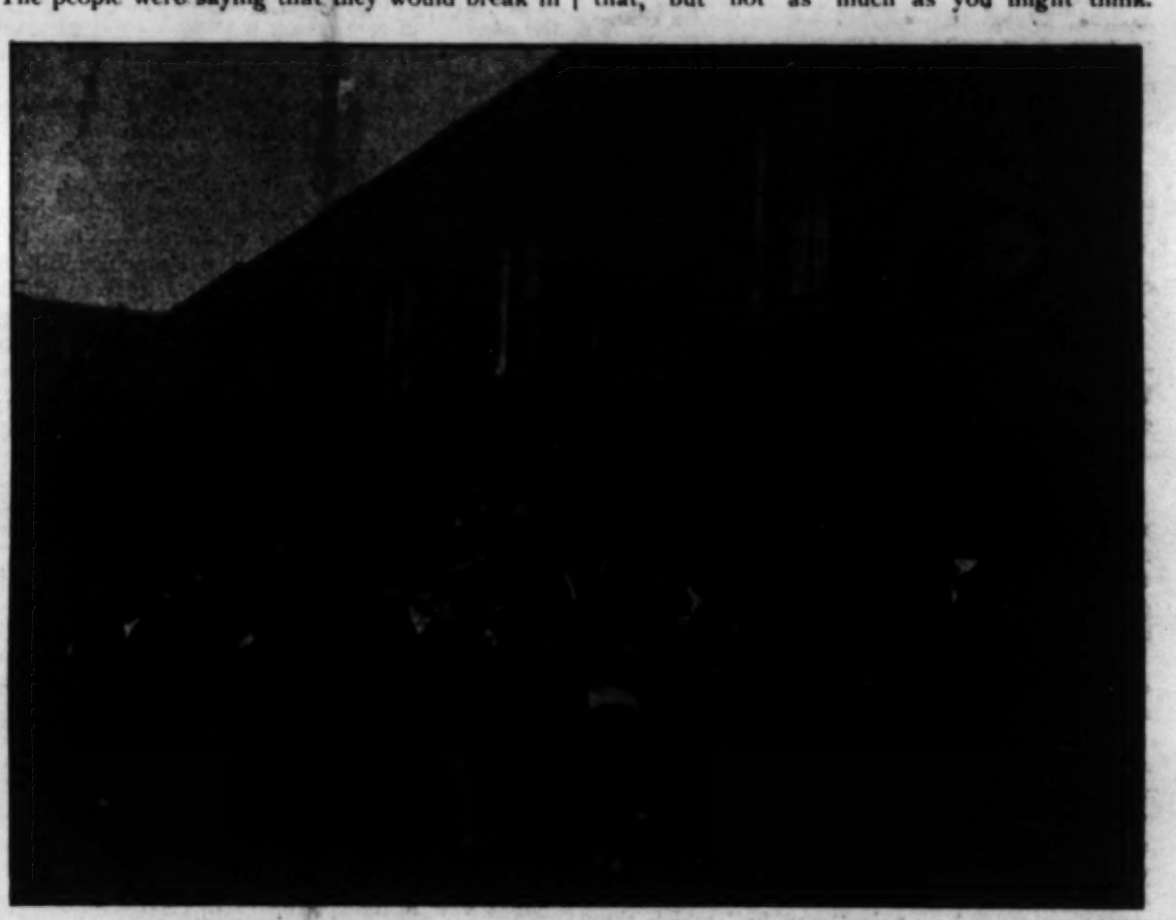
"3. Municipal distribution of food (a) ticket system of rationing, tickets to be distributed by means of a house-to-house canvass and register of inhabitants taken by local authorities; (b) The existing shops, restaurants, bakeries, etc., to be taken over by municipalities and owners and workers to be paid salaries. Shopkeepers, etc., to account for their stock by the tickets for which they exchange it. Municipalities should also have the power to open shops, restaurants, bakeries, etc., on their own account."

Miss Pankhurst declared that the present position was intolerable; women had to wait in the queues two and three hours for potatoes, sometimes they had to wait in the same way for bread, and if the scarcity of commodities should increase and the present haphazard methods continued they would have to wait for other commodities also. Those who were ill or obliged to work could not stand by the hour in a queue, and those who could were not sure of getting anything in the end. The deputation and those who had sent it there were of opinion that compulsory rationing and food tickets would be better than this, but the rationing must apply equally all round. The high price of substitutes increased the hardships occasioned by the potato shortage. The people would never be satisfied until private profit in food was abolished. The deputation recommended that whilst County and Borough Councils should not be debarred from opening depôts on their own account, that the existing shops, etc., should be taken over and the owners and employees paid salaries for doing the work, both in order that the people already engaged in the food industry should not suffer unduly and in order that there should not be the congestion and dislocation which might arise if an entirely new distributive system were undertaken at a moment's notice. Miss Pankhurst suggested that the maximum salary to be paid to managers might be £400 a year, the same as that of a Member of Parliament, but added that probably Lord Devonport might think this too low.

Mrs. Drake advocated communal kitchens for the use of factory workers and the school feeding of all the children attending the elementary schools. She said that her husband, who earned 35s. 6d. a week, could not afford, as things are to-day, to go to a restaurant for his dinner, but bought 2oz. of corned beef and some bread. She had given her four children for that day's dinner soup, which consisted of the water in which a swede had been boiled yesterday, and a few carrots. On Saturday, when she had to do her shopping, she went out and came in and went out and came in again, not knowing what to buy with the money at her disposal. The meat, which would have served for dinner for her family before the War would have cost her 6d. if she bought frozen meat. Last week she had to pay 4s. for the same amount: it was English meat, because she could not get frozen meat.

Mrs. Boyce said she was anxious that high prices should not drive the working woman, who knew how to cook, to go to soup kitchens where food might be provided by people who did not know how to cook.

Mrs. Harris said that she had been waiting in the bread queue with 200 others, the loaves were steaming hot and the baker dared not sell them. The people were saying that they would break in



A POTATO QUEUE IN EAST LONDON

and get them, but she said, "Wait, we are going to see Lord Devonport to ask him to help us." The baker had thanked her for saving his shop windows.

Lord Devonport interrupted: "But why can't you get bread? Is there more bread eaten than there used to be?"

Mrs. Carter explained that when potatoes are scarce and haricot beans are 10d. a pint, the people are obliged to fall back on bread, and the bakers, who may not sell bread which is less than 12 hours' old cannot cope with the demand. When you could give the children a potato and a little gravy they were satisfied, and, she said, "You can't give the children rice every day, they will not eat it. My little girl says, 'Mummie, *don't* give me rice.'" She had heard that to refuse to sell sugar except when a certain quantity of other goods were bought was no longer allowed, but the practice was still going on.

Lord Devonport challenged this statement, but all the women supported it with detailed information.

"And when we left here last Monday," said Mrs. Drake, "the cakes covered with sugar in Lyons' and the A.B.C. made us sick: we none of us had a bit to put in our tea for days. "No, not one of us," the other women assented.

Mrs. Carter continued that last Saturday she had waited the entire morning in the potato queue, and all her scrubbing and cleaning was neglected. "No work done!" said her husband when he came in to his dinner. Her little son had told her that the clergyman had asked him to join a lads' brigade: she had said, "Tell him you want some food in your inside." "If I don't give him a good inside now," she said, with a tremble in her voice, "What will he be when he's fourteen.?"

Lord Devonport looked uncomfortable, he began to reply without waiting to hear Mrs. Mason. He said that the lavish display of sugared cakes would be stopped, but that was a small matter. The trouble was that the submarines were sinking the sugar ships. The scarcity of commodities must become more and more acute for this reason. He urged that the deputation must not think that he did not sympathise with or understand working people: indeed, he did; for a considerable time he had represented a purely industrial constituency, and as Chairman of the Port of London Authority he had—. But his words tailed off into nothingness. Mrs. Carter was laughing nervously, and all the women looked very grim.

"You talk about profiteering," said Lord Devonport. "I admit there has been some of that, but not as much as you might think. Freight has had much to do with it ——."

"But that *is* profiteering," and "The Government could deal with that," the deputation urged.

"You must remember," said Lord Devonport, "that I only took charge at the end of January. It was in 1915 that prices ought to have been controlled."

"We went to see Mr. Runciman to ask for Government control of food and shipping in October, 1914," said Miss Pankhurst.

"But you mustn't blame me for what happened before I came," he protested, and went on to explain that he had been able to control the price of tea and coffee because the stocks were in the country, but they could not control such things as haricot beans because they were sold by Americans in this country. "It isn't simple," he said.

"No," said Miss Pankhurst, "and you will never be able to cope with the situation until you nationalise the food supply."

"You want us to nationalise the food supply and sweep the shop-keepers on one side," he said excitedly.

"Pay them a salary to do the work," she answered.

"Well, I tell you straight to your face, it will never happen," he said, starting up.

"It will happen sooner than you think or else there will be trouble."

"Is that a threat?"

"No, it is what I foresee!"

For a moment the atmosphere had been somewhat tense. Then Lord Devonport explained that this was a question for the Prime Minister. He had not the power to enter into such questions of "high politics."

"But wouldn't it assist you to have power to

(Continued on page 719.)

SYMPATHY.

If I were only a little puppy, not your baby, mother dear, would you say: "No" to me if I tried to eat from your dish? Would you drive me off, saying to me: "Get away, you naughty little puppy?"

Then go, mother, go! I will never come to you when you call me, and never let you feed me any more.

If I were only a little green parrot, and not your baby, mother dear, would you keep me chained lest I should fly away?

Would you shake your finger at me and say: "What an ungrateful wretch of a bird! It is gnawing at its chain day and night?"

Then go, mother, go! I will run away into the woods: I will never let you take me in your arms again.

—Rabindranah Tagore.

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"HUSH"

Whilst the Speaker's Conference was in session the Parliamentary wire-pullers put up a metaphorical "hush" notice and told us all not to agitate on the suffrage question, not to hold meetings, not to canvass Members of Parliament, but to wait in patience.

We knew the advice to be bad; we knew that every hour was needed for propaganda, for the adult suffragists had before them the task of converting the vast majority of the House of Commons, from preparedness to accept votes for some women, to preparedness to accept votes for all women. The early pioneers of the women's suffrage movement had launched it with the watchword, "votes for women on the same terms as it is or may be granted to men." Their minds were firmly fixed on this "*may be*" which they hoped would soon become full womanhood suffrage. But the influence on the movement of smaller minds had given great prominence to the "votes—for—women—who—pay—their—rates—and—taxes argument," and the Conciliation Bill propaganda for votes for one and a quarter million women had obscured the original broad human demand. Therefore now that a general Reform Bill was in prospect there was urgent need for a widespread propaganda of great meetings organised by the combined forces of all who desire to secure adult suffrage. But a "hush" notice issued from the House of Commons prevented that.

The "hush" Parliamentarians told us that after the Speaker's Conference had reported would come the time for the great adult suffrage propaganda. But when the report was issued they insisted that if there were any strong pressure for adult suffrage no Government measure would be brought in. They urged that the main object to strive for was the introduction of any Bill, however imperfect, for once introduced, the Bill could readily be altered. All sorts of widening amendments could be moved, and the broadest franchise would be obtained which could secure a majority in the House.

Until last Wednesday the bogies held up to us were Government reluctance to touch the franchise question and strong opposition in the House. Now that the debate has shown the Government to be anxious in its own interests to deal with franchise and registration, and the insignificant minority which before the War could be counted on to vote against women's suffrage, to have dwindled, rather than grown, these bogies are laid to rest.

The field is clear for Members of Parliament to move the promised widening amendments, but with an absolute disregard for the ethics of straightforward dealing, they are trying to erect the "hush" notice once more. Indeed, it is important that men and women who are accustomed to speak only that which they mean, should realise that the wire-pulling politicians, to whom they may turn for aid, are rather more likely to be wire-pulling *them* than to be managing other politicians.

The next move of the "Hush" Party is to demand that there shall be no amendments to the Government Bill, which will embody the Speaker's Conference proposals. Mr. Shortt's statement in last Wednesday's debate that he intended to vote against any amendment, although he might earnestly desire its passage, is one indication of this, but there are many others. At a recent Parliamentary dinner and reception, Sir John Simon suggested that the Speaker's Conference proposals should be accepted without amendments, but when the leader of a certain powerful woman's organisation replied that the terms were not acceptable, he fell back to the position that a Bill on those lines must be asked for, and that widening amendments should afterwards be moved. Knowing that move was afoot before the women's deputation to Mr. Lloyd George last Monday, we shall know how to accept the argument that Mr. Lloyd George's declaration has rendered widening amendments inadvisable. Mr. Lloyd George's statement on that occasion that men of the working class are afraid of the preponderance of women voters which an equal franchise would produce, and that the women should have heard the deputation of working men which waited upon him the other day, is one which requires some probing. The members of the Labour Party deputation will undoubtedly resent the imputation that the remark is applicable to them.

The bogey of Government reluctance to deal with the franchise having been removed, Mr. Lloyd George has produced another in the shape of the veto of the House of Lords. When the House of Lords threw out the Franchise Bill of 1884, the Lords possessed a power of veto which was absolute, but the Commons having rapidly repassed the Bill promptly returned it to the Upper House, and in view of the storm of public indignation, the House of Lords decided to give way. To-day, if a measure is passed twice through the Commons in a session the Lords cannot hinder it further, but as Party discipline holds sway in the House of Lords as it does in the House of Commons, and since there is a Coalition Government, we need not doubt that the other House will do what the Government directs. If the Commons are able to force the Government to accept widening amendments, the Lords will accept them also. Should the Lords dare to challenge a popular verdict by rejecting a franchise measure, it is certain that the forces of democracy would triumph and would greatly benefit by the contest.

It is said that if the coming Bill is not received with unanimity the Government may not introduce it, or having introduced it, may withdraw it, but it is obvious that there must be a franchise measure soon. It is urged that the Speaker's Conference proposals are so good that they must on no account be jeopardised, and adult suffragists are asked to endorse the opinion of that confirmed Tory, Mr. Walter Long, that this is "a golden opportunity." But it must be remembered that the proposals for the men's franchise fall far short of those embodied in the Asquith Reform Bill of 1912-13, and the proposals for women are very much less satisfactory than those of the Grey amendment to that Bill, which would have given Parliamentary votes to the wives of all Parliamentary electors and to all women Local Government electors, without the insulting age disqualification which has now appeared for the first time. The Grey amendment, which received the backing of Mr. Lloyd George and others, was estimated to be so generally acceptable to the House that only the opposition of the Prime Minister and several of his colleagues could possibly defeat it, and it was thought most probable that it would pass in spite of any appeal that the Government might make.

It is an accepted fact that no franchise measure can pass in which women are not included. Mr. Lloyd George has made many declarations on that head, and Mr. Bonar Law said last Wednesday: "I myself would think it wrong, and would do my best to prevent any extension of the suffrage to men which did not also extend it to women." How strange it is that a man who can say and believe that cannot summon up his courage to insist upon equality?

We know that politicians often find that considerations of expediency are sufficient to release them from their pledges, but the breaking of such promises becomes progressively unpopular, and for some years the average Member of Parliament has been heartily ashamed of the way in which the women's suffrage question has been treated by successive Governments. The suffragists command so big a majority in the House that they are not justified in receding from the demand for sex equality to which they are pledged, and the enactment of which we believe they have at least a good chance of securing, if they will but stand firm.

If this Bill were wrecked because an amendment to widen it were accepted, a better Bill would be introduced next time, and that next time cannot be very long delayed.

REFORM OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

On their face value the Speaker's Conference proposals represent an exceedingly poor compromise from the democratic point of view, but it is becoming clear that there is an attempt to attach a condition to the compromise which will go far to nullify any democratic advantage it possesses. The Government now proposes that the Speaker's Conference on the franchise shall be followed by a Speaker's Conference on the House of Lords. Of course, we shall be told that the intention is to democratise the institution and to bring our Parliamentary system into line with that of the self-governing Dominions. But undoubtedly the intention is to re-establish the power of veto and to entrench more firmly and effectively the militaristic capitalist interests which are looking with apprehension toward a big popular revival in the near future. A second chamber, unless its franchise and membership is as democratic as the Lower House, cannot fail to be a menace to democracy, and a second chamber constituted during a period of acute militarism and reaction will undoubtedly prove an instrument of a peculiarly dangerous kind. Emphatically we are for the abolition of the House of Lords, not for its reform.

At present the Tory Jingoes may have the power to carry all before them, but we believe that we shall gain nothing by assisting in the unsatisfactory compromises which are affected between them and the Liberal politicians, from whom they differ so very slightly. By entering into such compromises we do but postpone the realisation of the full measures of justice for which we strive.

At the Labour Electoral Reform Conference a delegate asked: "What should we have now if our fathers and grandfathers had said: 'I will not compromise by agreeing to accept a property vote?'"

We think the answer is: "You would now have had adult suffrage."

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.

THE EAST LONDON PEACE DEMONSTRATION

Everyone in East London has heard by this time of the Peace demonstration which is to take place on April 15th in Victoria Park. This is to be preceded by a procession, forming up at Beckton Road, Canning Town, at 2.30, and leaving at three o'clock, and marching via Barking Road to the Dock Gates at 3.30, where another contingent will be waiting to join up. From there the procession will proceed through Brunswick Road, St. Leonards Street, High Street, Bow, to the Obelisk, Bow, at four o'clock, to take up the Bow contingent, then on through Coborn Road, St. Stephen's Road, Roman Road, Grove Road, and thus to the Crown Gate, Victoria Park.

A children's contingent is being arranged, and mothers and children who cannot walk may obtain tickets to ride (price 2d. each) by applying in advance for them at 400 Old Ford Road, E.

Workers are urgently needed for distributing literature, house-to-house canvassing, and helping at Peace meetings. Those willing to help are asked to send in their names to Mr. Edward Fuller or Mrs. Hasler, 400 Old Ford Road, E. 3.

We make a most urgent appeal to all our readers to put every other engagement on one side in order to be present at this meeting.

The "spring push," with the appalling loss of life which is sure to accompany it, is in preparation. Let us gather together to show we desire the slaughter to end before the "spring push" takes place! This East London demonstration is the first of its kind to be held in London. If we join in making it the success that it ought to be, it will hearten those who are working for Peace in other districts to organise similar demonstrations there, and so help to give an added impetus to the growing Peace movement. Our hearts are craving for peace: Let us come out and show it!

PEACE DEMONSTRATION

VICTORIA PARK, LONDON, E.

SUNDAY, APRIL 15th, 1917.

Supported by East London Trades Councils, The Workers' Suffrage Federation, Branches of the I.L.P. and B.S.P. and other Organisations.

Speakers will include:

Mrs. C. DESPARD, ROSA HOBHOUSE, SYLVIA PANKHURST, THEODORA WILSON WILSON, REGINALD W. SORENSEN, HARRY DUBERY, E. C. FAIRCHILD, ALEXANDER GOSSIP, MRS. BOYCE, MRS. WALKER, MRS. DRAKE, Councillor B. GARDNER, Rev. H. CHALMERS (the Ayrshire Peace Candidate), and others.

Procession will form up at Beckton Road at 2.30, and proceed to Victoria Park *via* Dock Gates, 3.30 p.m. and the Obelisk, Bow, 4 p.m., reaching the Park at 4.30 p.m.

THE FRANCHISE SITUATION

IN PARLIAMENT

On March 28th Mr. Asquith moved a resolution calling for legislation on the lines of the Speaker's Conference Report. He said the conference had been one of the most remarkable concordats in our political history. In his opinion it would be folly to throw away the opportunity afforded by it. He said that even during the War it was necessary to have an electorate which was "not a sham or a simulation, but a real electorate which represents the considered opinion and will of the nation as a whole." But immediately he contradicted this by saying that the resolutions had been arrived at by a process of "give and take," and must be accepted as an agreed compromise. Giving and taking in this connection means giving some people more than one vote and leaving some people without any! Referring to votes for women, he said that some of his friends might think that, like Stesichorus, his eyes, "which for years in this matter, have been clouded by fallacies and sealed by illusions, at last had been opened to the truth." His opposition, he said, had been "based solely on considerations of public expediency." Of course, public expediency and the course which they think expedient in the interests of their own political party are usually one and the same thing to politicians, and Mr. Asquith is essentially a politician. He continued to explain that some years ago he had said: "Let the women work out their own salvation," and he considered they had worked it out in War work. Nevertheless, the need for giving women workers a voice in after-War reconstruction, he said, moved him still more, and as there had been no recurrence of militancy no one could contend that the House was yielding to violence.

With regard to the age disqualification he would say nothing on the delicate point of age or ages which are suggested, but a very able and energetic lady had suggested to him that the younger women most needed enfranchisement, and that if there were to be an age discrimination it should be at the other end of the scale. He added: "I do not pronounce any judgment as between those two views. I myself have always thought, and I have often said, I think in this House, that when once you have resolved to ignore the differentiation of sex it was difficult to introduce any other discrimination between the case of women and that of men. That is pre-eminently a matter for adjustment and compromise, and I feel confident the proposal will not be allowed to founder upon that rock."

THE "ANTI" AMENDMENT.

Mr. Salter moved an amendment that the House should only legislate to provide an immediate register and means of voting for electors absent on naval and military service. He argued that to do more would "perturb our Allies" and "discourage the fighting men." It was being said that the House must agree to what its representatives had decided at the Conference, but though the members of the Conference were, in his opinion, "good samples of the various parties," you could not "argue back from samples to bulk as though we were so much merchandise." He objected to being bound to agree in advance to anything any other typical Tory might accept. If it were not "claptrap," it would be "insulting" to suggest that some draughtsman should prepare a set of Bills which "must be passed through Parliament without substantial modification or debate." That would be an abrogation of the functions of the House. He advocated that soldiers and sailors should vote by proxy. He welcomed the Speaker's Conference proposals for women, as he had always been an advocate of "moderate suffrage for women," but the opposition to them was very bitter. He would be prepared to accept the widest suffrage that any civilised country had, provided there could be "constitutional safeguards," or in other words, a paralysing check on democracy, exercised by the Upper House. Sir Francis Lowe, in seconding the amendment, protested that he too was in favour of adult suffrage for men and "some form" of suffrage for women, but that to enact these things would be to play the part of Nero fiddling whilst Rome burnt.

THE PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH.

The Press has declared that Mr. Lloyd George's speech was remarkably eloquent. When read it is commonplace enough. Its main purpose was to prove that the least controversial thing to do is to accept all the findings of the Speaker's Conference as they stand with the exception of Proportional Representation, of which he said that it was "an entirely novel suggestion" on which he had not made up his mind, and did not wish to make up his mind till after the War. He thought that the members of the Speaker's Conference would not imperil the rest of their plan by pressing it. Indeed, he said: "I cannot imagine their doing so. The common sense they have shown in the rest of their conclusions proves to me they are sensible enough not to press this."

He then proceeded to eulogise the women munition workers, and said: "When we come to settle the conditions of labour with hundreds of thousands, running now into millions, of women in work in which they were never engaged before; when we come to recast the whole of our industrial system, are we going to fling them out without giving them a voice in determining the conditions? All I can say is it is an outrage, it is ungrateful, unjust, inequitable. I do not believe that the people of this country will do it."

Whether women should vote, and at what age, would be decided by the House of Commons. He had not the faintest doubt what the vote of the House of Commons would be.

Mr. Arnold Ward (U.), son of the notorious Anti, Mrs. Humphrey Ward, then voiced the anti-women's suffrage cry, the gist of his argument being that in politics as in war the position of women should be auxiliary, "and that men, who decided the issue during the War, should continue to be the masters in time of Peace." He promised that he and his fellow-antis would put up a bitter and prolonged fight; that if after the War the question were submitted to a referendum and they were beaten they would do their best to make women's suffrage a success. It is obvious that the antis know that their game is up, and yet it is pretended that it is necessary to regard their wishes so far as to give votes to only one-third of the adult womanhood.

MR. WALTER LONG.

Mr. Walter Long (U.) made a particularly absurd speech, saying that the passage of this Bill would be "a great service to the Empire, and therefore to the world." He argued that the Dominions were saying to the Mother Country: "Put yourself on the same solid foundation on which we rest." Yet, of course, the proposals he was advocating are not adult suffrage which obtains in the Dominions. He said that all his life he had been a convinced opponent of votes for women, but he had to confess he was now beggared for material for attacking and criticising the enfranchisement of women. He could no longer say that "women were physically prevented from performing those tasks which are closely connected with Government," but he still believed "it would be better that the franchise should not be granted to women." But he would vote for these proposals as they seemed to him "a golden opportunity"—for what? Perhaps the underlying reason of his protestation was partially revealed in his suggestion that another "representative Conference" should be called to consider the question of the Second Chamber. He said, "If I looked on this purely as a party man, I should say: 'I have an opportunity to-day which is never likely to recur.'"

Mr. Clynes (Lab.), speaking for the Labour Party, said that at the Labour Conference on electoral reform a large body of opinion was still determined to press Parliament for the establishment of adult suffrage and other franchise and registration reforms that such conferences had long demanded, but "after mature consideration" the Conference had agreed to approve legislation, if introduced early, on the lines of the Speaker's Conference Report.

WIDENING AMENDMENTS.

Mr. Shortt (L.), made an ominous statement which may show the way the wind is blowing in regard to widening amendments. He said: "If an amendment were moved of which I entirely approved and which suggests matters which I long to see introduced, then I should feel bound to vote against it."

Sir Frederick Banbury (U.), the well-known anti-suffragist, said: "Once admit that a woman is entitled to have a vote, then she is entitled to have it on the same terms as men." It is said that he intends to introduce an amendment to give votes to women on the same terms as men. That will be a pretty test of the sincerity of the Members who profess to believe in sex equality!

Mr. Bonar Law (U.) said that he believed in votes for women, and would think it wrong to pass a Bill which did not include them. He recalled the fact that the Asquith Reform Bill was rejected for this reason.

Mr. Salter's amendment was rejected by 341 votes to 62. The parties were divided as follows:—

	Ayes	Noes
Liberal	188	0
Unionist	77	61
Nationalist	51	0
Labour	24	0
Independent	1	1

W.S.F. LETTER TO MR. ASQUITH.

The following letter has been addressed to Mr. Asquith on behalf of the Workers' Suffrage Federation:—

"Dear Sir,—On behalf of this organisation, I desire to say that we are glad to know that any opposition towards women's suffrage that you once felt is now withdrawn, and that women can count upon your support in gaining their enfranchisement. We trust that you will use your influence to make the proposed franchise thoroughgoing and democratic, and we believe that we are justified in anticipating that you will do so by the reply which you made to the deputation from this organisation which waited upon you on the 20th June, 1914. On that occasion you said:—

'On one point I am glad to say I am in complete agreement with you. I have always said, and I think I was reminded by Mrs. Scurr that I have said that if you are going to give the franchise to women, you must give it to them upon the same terms as you do to men. That is, make it a democratic measure. It is no good tinkering with a thing of this kind. If the discrimination of sex is not sufficient to justify the giving of the vote to one sex and the withholding of it from another, it follows, a fortiori, it seems to me, that discrimination of sex does not justify, and cannot warrant giving the women a restricted form of franchise while you give the men an unrestricted form.'

"We hope we may count upon you to press for legislation on those lines in order that the franchise of this country may be brought into line with the Overseas Dominions, Norway and Denmark, a large part of the United States, and also that which is proposed for Russia. We would point out that a franchise limitation of 30 to 35 years, such as has been tentatively suggested, would exclude 90 per cent. of the women who have replaced men in industry, and, as a great desire is expressed to enfranchise these women, we feel sure that no great difficulty should be experienced in inducing the House to give the vote to women at 21 years. With regard to the suggestion that only women owners or tenants (or wives of owners or tenants) should be enfranchised, we would remind you that this would exclude the most needy class of working women, and we therefore feel sure that you will recognise that such a provision would be both unwise and unjust. We trust, also, that you will press for the removal of the pauper disqualification, which would bear with peculiar hardship on widows of men engaged in industry, also on the 'broken men' and their wives or widows, who, if the present arrangements are not modified, will receive no pension.—Faithfully yours,

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST, Hon. Sec."

MR. ASQUITH'S REPLY.

Madam,—I am in receipt of your letter of March 29th, and I will give it careful consideration.—Yours faithfully, H. H. ASQUITH.

The deputation representative of women's work in trades and professions which was received by the Prime Minister on March 29th, was largely representative of women who would not be enfranchised by the Speaker's Conference proposals as they stand. Mr. Lloyd George indicated that the proposed Government measure is to be on the lines of those proposals, and said that the Government has not yet made up its mind whether the age limit shall be thirty or thirty-five. With the same excuse that the matter was not decided he evaded Mrs. Fawcett's questioning as to whether the Women's' Suffrage clauses would be treated in the same manner by the Government as other parts of the Bill, whether the Government whips would be put on and so on.

Mrs. Despard reminded him of his speech at Bath in 1911, when he said that the question was international, and that if women had the vote the fields of Europe would not be drenched with the blood of her sons. In that speech he also said:—

"A measure of limited franchise," he said, "which in my judgment would have been grossly unfair to Liberalism. Now that Bill has been torpedoed, and the way is clear for a broad and democratic amendment of suffrage for women."

But on Thursday his only advice to women was, "stand by this proposal and say that it will satisfy you."

In spite of a promise from Mr. Lloyd George to receive the Workers' Suffrage Federation along with other organisations before the introduction of a Bill, the Federation had not been invited to send representatives. Nevertheless, Mrs. Drake was present to speak for the Federation and for working women in general. She replied to the Prime Minister's' speech by saying that if he cared to do so, he could secure the introduction of a measure to establish complete equality of voting rights between the sexes, for which the suffrage movement was supposed to stand, and as the movement had been largely carried on by the younger women it would be a betrayal to be satisfied with anything less. Many of those present congratulated Mrs. Drake on her protest, but no one else seems to have had the courage to contradict the Prime Minister.

Mr. CLYNES, M.P., AND THE SUFFRAGE BILL

Dear Editor,—My reply to the question in your last issue is to ask you to distinguish between the "desire" of women suffragists and the decision of women suffragists on the recommendations of the Speaker's Conference.

We well know that women desire more than is offered. My argument was that women had decided to support legislation on the lines of the resolution which the Labour Conference approved.

Acceptance of certain terms does not mean that we do not want more; it means that for the present we cannot get more.

The opposition of Labour to the Speaker's Conference recommendations would have been welcomed with delight by all opponents of Suffrage, and could have meant the complete destruction of those recommendations. The support of Labour is the guarantee of legislation which is certain to begin the political freedom of women.—Yours faithfully,

J. R. CLYNES.

WOMANHOOD SUFFRAGE in RUSSIA

Unfortunately there seems no doubt that the grant of Adult Suffrage for the Russian constituent assembly applies so far to men only. On April 1st, a great demonstration demanding equal rights for women was held outside the Duma and addressed by Vera Figner and other well-known women revolutionaries. M. Rodzianko, the President of the Duma, said that the question should be submitted to the Constituent Assembly, when it is elected. But, of course, the women want to vote with the men in electing the members of that Assembly.

We hope they may yet win the power to do so.

MRS. BOUVIER'S CASE

Miss Sylvia Pankhurst has addressed the following letter to the Minister of Pensions:—

Dear Mr. Barnes,—I wish to draw your attention to what, I think you will agree, is a very serious injustice. On Sunday last, Mrs. Bouvier, a speaker of this organisation, was arrested in Hyde Park because she said that 100,000 "broken men" had been discharged without pensions and would only get a gratuity. The detective said she had gone too far in saying this, and the Magistrate at the Marlborough Police Court the next morning required her to find surety for the sum of £20 to keep the peace for 12 months, and threatened to deport her if she were brought up again. I am sure you will desire to use your influence in regard to this case, as Mrs. Bouvier was only repeating what you yourself had told us. I may say that Mrs. Bouvier is a Russian woman, married to an Italian subject and has resided in this country for 30 years.—Faithfully yours, E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.

The following reply has been received:—

Dear Madam,—Mr. Barnes desires me to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 29th instant respecting the conviction of Mrs. Bouvier, and to say that he has caused the attention of the Home Secretary to be drawn to the case.—I am, yours faithfully, HERBERT EVANS, Private Secretary.

RE MRS. BOUVIER'S ARREST IN HYDE PARK ON SUNDAY, MARCH 28th.

Mr. W. Vance Packman, whose letter is printed below, writes on March 30th:

Mrs. Eugenie Anna Bouvier.

Dear Madame,—Permit me as an Englishman and a Catholic to express my sincere sympathy in the unjust and tyrannical treatment to which you have just been subjected. I was present at your meeting on Sunday, though on the edge of the crowd, and I can vouch that, whilst I was there, you used no "insulting words" worthy of a prosecution, even under the Defence of the Realm Act, and so far from the crowd being "very hostile," the vast majority appeared to support your views, and many of them, including myself, when the police inspector laid his hands upon you, shouted "Shame."

I have written a similar letter to this to the wretched Police Magistrate, Denman, and assured him that this growth of "Prussianism" will have to be swept away by the people. I trust that you are at liberty and suffering no inconvenience.

Yours faithfully,

W. VANCE PACKMAN.

Editor of "The Second Spring."

PARLIAMENT AS WE SEE IT

March 27th.—Lord R. Cecil said there had been a few deaths from starvation in Greece owing to the British blockade.

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Mr. Hope (U. Min.) said German prisoners of war in a certain quarry refused to work without higher pay and larger ration. Disciplinary action was taken and they returned to work. Is this compulsory blacklegging by aliens?

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March 29th.—Ireland and the food question, as usual occupied the greater part of question time.

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Mr. Nugent (I.N.) alleged that a superintendent of the Dublin Metropolitan Police asked a sergeant into a public-house, and there conspired with him to dismiss certain constables; also that constables are threatened with punishment for failure to bring more summonses against innocent persons. Mr. Duke (U. Min.) knew nothing of these matters.

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Colonel Sir M. Wilson (U.) asked for the establishment of communal kitchens in the East End. Captain Bathurst said that this is being done by the War Savings Committee and that he is also writing to the municipalities on this question. Whilst agreeing that municipal restaurants would be quite useful institutions we do not think they would meet the present situation. We wish to see national food buying by a national commission consisting of one-third experts, one-third workers in the trades concerned, one-third working-class housewives, and distribution under the control of municipalities, which should be entitled both to use the existing shops, paying their owners a salary to manage them, and to open municipal shops!

OFFICER BAYONETS CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR.

Sir William Byles (L.) stated that conscientious objectors at Winnall Camp, Winchester, were maltreated by their officers, J. P. Key being wounded three times by a bayonet handled by an officer, and a sergeant having to take a rifle from one of the officers. The medical man, who dressed Key's wounds, said that half an inch in another direction would have proved fatal.

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In reply to Mr. O'Shaughnessy (N.), Sir A. Griffith-Boscawen said that Private Joseph Cosgrove, who was wounded in both legs at Mons and had had one amputated four inches below the hips, was rightly receiving a pension of 12s. 6d., which under the Royal Warrant had been raised to 16s. 6d.. If a further amputation was necessary and could be treated as "hip amputation," he would be entitled to a pension of 22s. a week.

Four inches of leg value 5s. 6d.!

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Mr. Byrne (N.) asked who was responsible for the £67 19s. 1d. taken from Miss Julia Hannon by a Dublin police detective and deposited in the Bridewell Police Station, which was not returned to her when she was proved innocent, and is said to have been lost. Mr. Duke (U.): "The police are advised that they are not under any liability in this case."

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Mr. France (L.) asked the Prime Minister if the Government intended to compensate those responsible for the sale of non-intoxicating food, the import or manufacture of which is prohibited or restricted, in the same way as it compensates those engaged in the liquor trade. Captain Bathurst (U.) repiled in the negative.

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Mr. Hayes Fisher (U. Min.), in reply to Mr. Jacobsen and Mr. Pringle, said that any municipality, county council, urban district or parish council wishing, without statutory power, to undertake the distribution of coal, food, &c., would have to take the consequences of their action, unless the Government decided that the intervention of local authorities was desirable.

THE BLOCKADE.

On the Consolidated Bill there was a grim discussion as to whether all that can be done to starve the workers of Germany is being done. Lord Robert Cecil (U. Min.) gave figures to prove that Norway, Sweden, Holland, and Denmark are not allowed by Britain to import as much food and other necessaries as they had for home consumption before the War. Sir Edward Carson (U. Min.), coming out to defend a fellow Unionist, admitted the absurdity of the "hidden hand" nonsense by which certain jingo newspapers try to occupy the minds of the people in order that they may not think of Peace.

COAL CONTROL.

It was asked what the Coal Controller is doing? Mr. Roberts (Lab. Min.) replied that he did not yet know much about the matter, but that young able-bodied miners are still being taken for the Army.

LORD MILNER'S VISIT TO RUSSIA.

Mr. Dillon (I.N.) exposed the appalling hypocrisy of the British Government's conduct in regard to the Russian revolution. Lord Milner had recently spent three weeks in Russia as agent for the Government. He had gone all over the country making speeches, but the Censor had refused to allow the reports of these speeches to be published in this country. The "Morning Post" Petrograd correspondent, who is inspired by the British Embassy, published an account of Lord Milner's doings, in which it was emphatically stated that Lord Milner had not urged that the Duma should be allowed to reassemble, and that on the contrary, his visit had resulted in the formation of "personal friendship between the ruling classes of both countries, and his speeches had disabled Russians of what they had been led to believe about England, this being, it is to be presumed from the context, that Britain would take sides with the Russian democracy in opposition to the autocratic régime. The "Morning Post" correspondent reported, Lord Milner at Moscow said that there was not the slightest foundation for the rumours of unrest which had besieged him since he came to Russia. To this a Russian paper, the "Viedomosti" had replied: "Extraordinary rumours betoken an extraordinary state of affairs, to which only a popular Ministry could put an end, and if this only too well-known Conservative and Imperialist merely wanted to insult Moscow, what right had he to come here at all?" Since the revolution the Labour Minister, Mr. Kerensky had said: "We Russians have been latterly rather worried about England because of the close relations between your Government and the corrupt Government we had."

Lord Milner returned to this country on March 5th, and next day the "Times" reported on Lord Milner's authority that it was largely owing to the Czar that his mission had been so satisfactory.

There appears to be reason to believe that Lord Milner was sent to Russia to assure the Czar and his Government that if they would only persevere with the War they could count on the support of the British Government in dealing with popular unrest later on. The hypocrisy of the Government's "fraternal greetings" to the Provisional Government needs no comment!

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Mr. Dillon (N.) said that last year 60,000 British troops in Salonika were stricken with "perhaps the most malignant form of malaria in the world," and asked why 400,000 of them are being kept in that pestilential swamp "to die like flies."

THE COST OF THE WAR.

Major Godfrey Collins (L.) moved an amendment expressing the urgent need for greater control of finance by the House of Commons and the Treasury. He said that if the War lasted much longer we should have left only the Consolidated Fund and the National Debt, and everyone would be either a salaried servant of the State or living on the interest of money he had lent to the Government. To-day the National Debt is 4,000 millions, and though 1,000 millions of that may be repaid by the Dominions and Allies, it would cost £1,000,000,000 to demobilise if the War ended to-morrow. Control by the House of Commons was gone. How much control had the Treasury over the new Departments?

Mr. Faber said if the War ended now the result would be that our debts would cause us to "face for all time a Peace Budget of 500 millions a year." We are going straightway to bankruptcy, and so is the whole of Europe. The financial control of the world will be in the United States. Other Members spoke to the same effect, but no one suggested anything practical except Mr. D. M. Mason (L.), who cried out: "Cut off supplies" and "turn out the Government." Sir Frederick Banbury told a story of a Government contract in which £54 a set was paid for articles which the sub-contractor supplied at £12 15s. 6d.

Mr. Baldwin (U.), Lord of the Treasury, replied that the House of Commons could not control expenditure during the War, and that it had increased expenditure by pressing for wages and pensions to be raised.

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On the Army (Annual) Bill, Mr. King (L.) moved an amendment that no soldier of the Regular forces shall be entitled to be discharged who is suffering from venereal disease. Mr. Macpherson (U. Min.) replied that the Government could not agree to this as it takes two years to cure. The Army had not the necessary hospital accommodation. "Moreover, it would not do for it to be said or thought the Army had become a segregation camp for this particular type of disease." Quite so! But is the Army a propagating centre for the disease?

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General Ivor Phillips moved an amendment to establish a Military Appeal Court to which officers who considered themselves unjustly sentenced might appeal for redress. Mr. Macpherson said that the Government could not accept it, and it was withdrawn. Mr. Harvey (L.) moved that soldiers who are punished by being attached to a fixed object shall not be tied up in such a way that they cannot move their hands and feet or raise the arms above the head. Again the Government refused to accept the suggestion, and Mr. Harvey withdrew his motion.

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March 28th.—Franchise Debate (see page 717).

CONSCRIPTION OF CRIPPLES BILL.

The Military Service (Review of Exceptions) Bill was read a second time. This iniquitous measure gives the War Office power to call up and re-examine with a view to conscripting them, men who have previously been rejected either as medically unfit for service or on other grounds, or who have been discharged from the Army as medically unfit. If a man has had at least three months' service with the colours "or his disease has been caused or aggravated by naval or military service" he shall not be called up again for a year; if he has been re-examined under this Bill and again rejected he shall not be called up for another examination for six months. If a man fails to comply with the notice calling him up he will be fined £5 or sent to prison for three months.

As the Bill is being rattled through the House in hot haste, we shall presently see the men who have been fitted with artificial arms and legs returned to the trenches to test their mechanism with the "broken men," who though denied a pension and proper care, and treatment in their illness, have somehow struggled back to some measure of feeble health. Men whose physique was considered too weak for the Army will be taken now, though pensions to "broken men" are still refused.

Mr. Bonar Law (U. Min.) recommended the Bill by the usual story of military necessity. The submarine menace, he said, had made it imperative to build more ships and to produce more home-grown food. Therefore, by an unexplained contradiction this Bill was produced to get more men into the Army. By one of those peculiar coincidences which, since the War, have always been discovered by the Government, it appeared that conscription has produced exactly 100,000 men less than the military authorities expected, and this Bill which will affect 1,000,000 will produce, according to the War Office estimate, exactly this 100,000 men by which the War Office over-estimated the results of conscription. We are taught to believe that the War Office strategy is carefully worked out to the last man, and if they do not get all they expected the whole of their card castle will come tumbling down. Mr. Law assured the House that 100,000 men, which it is estimated this Bill will produce, might make all the difference in securing a decisive victory, and he appealed to the House to show the men in the trenches that they were not to be left in the lurch.

Mr. Hogg (L.) moved, and Mr. Pringle seconded, an amendment declining to proceed with the Bill till the Government agreed to a pension for all disabled soldiers. The movers and seconders both urged that the House ought to consider whether it would not be better to abandon the Salonika Expedition and thus release 250,000 men than to conscribe 100,000 medically unfit. Mr. Hogge said that the growing number of men discharged without pension was partially concealed by transferring them to Class W. Reserve, where they get neither pay nor pension, and are frequently unable to get work. Mr. Asquith (L.) Mr. McKenna (L.), and others supported the amendment. Mr. Bonar Law tried to pretend that the only men who do not get pensions are those who have "never attended drills and done no work." Sir Henry Dalziel (L.) complained that some time ago a circular had been sent to the doctors instructing them not to pay too much attention to the condition of the recruit at the time but to consider what it might be in six months' or a year's time. It was a case of "pass the recruit: let him take his luck, and see what happens." Mr. Anderson (Soc.) congratulated the Government on having decided to break its pledge this time by means of legislation; its usual course had been to make pledges in order to secure the easy passage of a Bill and then to break the pledge without legislation.

PENSIONS APPEAL COURT PROMISED.

Mr. Bonar Law promised a much more careful medical examination. Later he conceded the point that as there was a fear that some men who ought to receive pensions would only get gratuities, the Government would consider whether an independent tribunal could be set up to review such cases and to come to a final decision upon them. On receiving this promise, Mr. Hogge withdrew the amendment.

Mr. Caradoc Rees (L.) and Sir Henry Dalziel urged the conscription of all the friendly aliens in this country. Colonel Burn (U.) wanted 100,000 men from Ireland. Mr. Dillon replied that they could be got if Ireland had Home Rule. Mr. McNeill (U.) said that this little Bill could only be regarded as a temporary stop-gap: something very much more drastic was required to bring in men "in very much larger numbers." He did not indicate where the men (or is it women?) are to come from. Mr. Churchill (L.) called for the raising of the age for military service, a secret session and a debate on what he and his fellow militarists call "man-power."

Sir John Simon (L.) made a feeble speech, from which, as Mr. McNeill pointed out, it was impossible to determine whether he was for or against the amendment. He said that since the enactment of Conscription his efforts had been directed towards securing the efficient working of the machine. He said that no one could have any sympathy with what he called "the fraudulent tricksters" who evade the Military Service Acts by fraudulent means though physically fit. "They ought to be dealt with," he said, "whether they escaped owing to their own fraud or owing to some failure in the working of the machine." Sir John Simon though he left the Cabinet on Conscription is a man who likes to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds!

Mr. Philip Snowden (Soc.) attacked the Bill, not merely for the reason given in the pension amendment, but as one of the Conscription Acts. It had been said that it was not the Government, but the nation, which desired to secure another 100,000 men for the Army: if that were so there would have been no need for compulsion, the men would have volunteered. From the pensions point of view he urged that the amendment did not go far enough because it did not refer to the position of dependents of men who die without pension being granted.

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March 30th.—Mr. Hogge (L.) tried to get from the Pensions Minister the scale drawn up before March 6th to be paid to disabled men who are to be given gratuities in exceptional cases of not less than £150. Mr. Barnes (Min. Lab.) replied that he had not seen the scale, a very remarkable confession of ignorance for a Pensions Minister to make. He added: "On consideration of the officers' warrant we had begun to contemplate possible increase of gratuity, it was subsequently increased by 50 per cent., and a new scale was then put in hand. *This I do not propose to communicate to the House.* It is intended to form a guide for Departmental purposes only." As we have pointed out before, the soldiers and sailors and their dependants have no rights: they have to take what is given to them and have no remedy when unjustly treated.

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During the usual string of food questions, Mr. Outhwaite drew attention to the fact that wheat purchased in Australia is to be paid for at 49s. a quarter, and after paying 15s. a quarter freightage is sold at 65s. a quarter here, whilst British farmers are charging 90s. a quarter. Captain Bathurst (U.), Parliamentary Secretary to Food Controller, replied that it was not in the public interest to give information concerning the prices paid for wheat in different parts of the Empire, as this would cause dissatisfaction and jealousy. Mr. Outhwaite (L.) asked whether bread and wheat are cheaper in France than in Britain? Captain Bathurst said, Yes, but did not tell why! Mr. Thorne (Lab.) asked whether if families agreed to be rationed on the family book system, they would be guaranteed the food? Captain Bathurst said it would be impossible to give a guarantee, and said that a Departmental Committee is considering the family book system of rationing.

Mr. Bonar Law (U. Min.) said that civilians injured by enemy air raids will not be compensated, because of "considerations which cannot be given in answer to a question."

MILITARY SERVICE BILL IN COMMITTEE.

The afternoon was mainly spent in moving amendments to this Bill, most of which were resisted by representatives of the Government, and either withdrawn or negatived without a division. Mr. Snowden pressed to a division an amendment to exclude from the operations of the Bill men already disabled in the War. One hundred and fifty members voted against this amendment, and 60 for it, of whom only four were Labour members, the majority being Irish.

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April 2nd.—Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck (U.) drew attention to the delay—sometimes of five or six months—in obtaining an answer from the Ministry of Munitions with regard to issuing permits for building lavatory and cloak-room accommodation in factories, and also stated that in some Government T.N.T. factories there were many breaches of the regulations for safeguarding the health of the workers, and in one factory no alternative work was given, which resulted in a sickness percentage of 10 per cent., as compared with 2 per cent. where there was alternation of work.

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Mr. A. Williams (L.) asked: "In the event of this country falling short of food who is going to be hanged for it?"

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Mr. Bonar Law (U. Min.) said the Government recognises the urgency of considering the constitution and powers of the Second Chamber. Sir G. Younger (U.) asked if the position of the conscientious objector could be dealt with freely in the Franchise Bill, and Mr. Outhwaite (L.) asked for the same freedom with regard to the despatch of men over military age who have not taken part in the War. Mr. Bonar Law said that the nature of the Bill would make it possible for the House to discuss these questions.

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Mr. P. Billing (Ind.) pressed for an early secret session.

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In reply to Mr. Gilbert (L.), Mr. Stephen Walsh (Lab.) said that for National Service in Great Britain 12 Commissioners at a salary of £500, two Deputy Commissioners at £300, 38 Sub-Deputy Commissioners at £250, two at £200, and one at £150 per annum, mostly from the land agent class, and 234 Deputy Sub-Commissioners, who were volunteers, and eight loaned from other Government Departments, had been appointed.

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A number of instances in Ireland were given of old-age pensioners not receiving the extra 2s. 6d. though it had been sanctioned by the local Pensions Committees.

ORIGINAL DEFECTIVE.

QUESTIONS OF THE DAY

POOR LAW DISQUALIFICATION

At a meeting of the Birmingham Guardians on March 21st the following resolution was unanimously adopted:—

"This Board being of opinion that the disfranchisement of recipients of parochial relief has no deterrent effect upon the undeserving, and only inflicts additional hardship on the good and self-respecting who are compelled to seek parochial relief, hereby urges that any scheme of electoral reform should provide that parochial relief, of any description, should cease to disqualify for voting at any election. That copies of this resolution be forwarded to the local Members of Parliament, the Local Government Board, and the Poor-Law Unions' Association, with a request that those persons and authorities will use their best endeavours to obtain an amendment of the law in this respect."

Other Boards of Guardians should follow suit.

PROHIBITION OR NATIONALISATION OF DRINK

The Prime Minister has announced that the Government is considering whether prohibition or nationalisation of the liquor trade is most feasible and likely to assure the greatest measure of assent. Prohibition has swept rapidly across Canada during the last three years. Every province in the Dominion has enacted prohibition legislation except Quebec, and in Quebec, out of 13,000 municipalities, more than 1,100 are dry under local option laws. Saskatchewan has Government dispensaries in a few centres.

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The annual report of the Registrar-General shows a marked increase of tuberculosis amongst men, and a slight increase amongst women. And yet we are told that tuberculosis cannot be contracted at the War, and the broken men who suffer from it are refused pensions.

THE PRICE OF BREAD

A baker in East London writes:—

"I should like to say for your guidance in the campaign you are conducting against increasing food prices that anything above 10½d. for the 4 lb. loaf is unwarranted for East End ready-money trade at the present price of flour. That an advance of another 1s. per sack would not warrant a rise in bread, and that statements in the Press to the effect that 'War Flour' is less productive are misleading and contrary to our experience as practical bakers."

WORK FOR DISABLED SOLDIERS

A certain Mr. Rothband, of Albion Works, Manchester, is busily urging that a Royal Appeal should be sent out to employers of labour to inscribe their names on a National Roll pledging each firm to find work for at least one disabled soldier. Mr. Rothband has been somewhat rebuffed by the Government, but he is pleased with the response he has got from employers. Here is a typical letter from the rich firm of Brunner, Mond and Co., Northwich: "We are quite ready to employ at least one disabled soldier or sailor, and have no doubt that we shall have, as long as they exist, more than one. If your scheme is generally taken up throughout the country, we shall be glad to add our name, with the proviso that the disabled soldier or sailor should be one of our own men." May and Padmore Ltd., Birmingham, like many other firms, "hesitate to give a binding declaration." Very few of the firms quoted give any definite undertaking, fewer still make any reference to employing their own men, and none express a sense of obligation to find employment for all their own men. So far from regarding the replies to Mr. Rothband as encouraging, we think that any soldier or sailor who reads the list will feel that the chance of finding a job kept waiting for his return is becoming remote, in spite of the fact that Mr. John Hodge has "the most supreme confidence in the pledged word of the managers, whom he knows personally." Mr. Rothband's scheme appears to be open to many objections from the Trade Union point of view.

INDIA

Mr. Austin Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for India, has announced that he is in correspondence with the Viceroy in regard to

"The selection of two gentlemen who are to accompany the Secretary of State in his capacity of representative of India at the meetings of the War Cabinet."

Mr. Chamberlain told a Press representative that:

The formal recognition by his Majesty's Government of the great assistance rendered by India in the War and of her position in the Empire will give great satisfaction in India and will be well received in the self-governing Dominions.

As to the latter point, Mr. Chamberlain should not be too sure: the self-governing Dominions know too much of genuine independence of Westminster, to be impressed by sham "recognition." But how are the "two gentlemen who are to accompany" Mr. Chamberlain to be chosen? Are they to be of the Indian race? It is strange to think of wooden Mr. Chamberlain with his top hat and his eyeglass as "the representative of India."

FREE TRADE THROWN OVERBOARD

Mr. Lloyd George and a number of Tariff Reform Jingoes met in the House of Commons on March 26th, and passed resolutions calling upon the Government to set up machinery for establishing Imperial Preference, and giving effect to the resolutions of the Paris Conference and of Lord Balfour of Burleigh's Committee, which declared for tariff walls. Lloyd George has thus definitely thrown Free Trade overboard.

STATE PURCHASE OF THE LIQUOR TRADE

State purchase of the liquor trade is said to be under consideration. Though some dangers must attach to the placing of this trade in the hands of a State controlled by capitalist interests, we nevertheless believe that State ownership of liquor, even under our present flagrantly imperfect Government, must prove an improvement on private ownership. We therefore support the proposal.

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Miss Damer Dawson, a commandant of the Women's Police Service, says: "If there is one thing which the work of the streets proves more clearly than another it is that the only persons who are arrested for soliciting are women. We have tried to obtain the conviction of men for molesting and soliciting and have failed. The police bring in the charge as that of drunkenness, and the magistrate dismisses them."

FOOD CONTROLLER'S ASSISTANT

Mrs. Pember Reeves, author of "Round About a Pound a Week," has been appointed as an assistant to Lord Devonport, the Food Controller. Will she see that the woman with "Round About a Pound a Week" is able to preserve herself and her family from the pangs of hunger?

HOW THE MATTER CONCERNS US

Labour is concerned because the number of new teachers tends to decline owing to the miserable salaries, and the education of the workers' children will consequently suffer. London's Education Committee is about the worst in the country, and their attitude in this matter is in keeping with their general reactionary policy. But teachers have too long stood aloof from the great Labour movement. However, the L.C.C. is hitting them in the stomach, and Little Mary has much influence.

£5 MATERNITY BENEFIT

It is announced that the maternity benefit is to be raised to £5. This is the sum which has long been granted for maternity in the Overseas Dominions, where women vote. The grant will be of great value to poor mothers, but, of course, we want to see poverty abolished altogether.

THE ALBERT HALL MEETING

The following resolution was passed at the Albert Hall meeting:—"This meeting sends joyful congratulations to the democracy of Russia, and calls upon the Governments of Great Britain and of every country, neutral and belligerent alike, to follow the Russian example by establishing industrial freedom, freedom of speech and the Press, the abolition of social, religious, and national inequalities, an immediate amnesty for political and religious offences, and universal suffrage." And the loudest cheers were for Peace and Freedom.

• • • •

The "Daily News" reports that:—"A certain small district of half a dozen villages in Central Russia declared itself an independent Republic, which sent to Petrograd to say it was ready to enter into pourparlers with the Russian Republic on the subject of mutual tariffs. Incidentally it offered a considerable quantity of onions and other vegetables to the Russian Republic on reasonable terms."

PRUSSIANISM COMES NORTH: By P. J. Dollan

We have been experiencing a new form of military oppression in Scotland which, if allowed to pass without protest and to develop will prove a serious menace to trade union progress. The oppression has taken place under the new order empowering the military authorities or the police to enter any meeting, private or otherwise, and take note of the proceedings or search those present. Such an order it was thought before the War, was only possible in those regions where Czarism ruled and where the Kaiser was boss and would not be tolerated in this country under any circumstances. However, it has arrived and is now in force, and as yet is being operated with caution. If the trade unions allow it to continue in operation it will be operated with determined persistence and with disastrous consequences to trade unionism, whose Parliamentary representatives appear quite careless as to what oppression is visited upon the rank and file.

Already two trade union meetings have been raided by the military in Glasgow, and it is significant that at the time of the raids each meeting was engaged discussing a claim for increased wages. Both meetings were connected with the Shop Assistants' Union branches and were of a private character, and were confined to members. Only those immediately concerned with the furtherance of the claims for better wages were supposed to know of the meetings which were held in the Union Halls, and only those concerned were invited to attend. The outside public knew nothing about the meetings which were held at the same hour as hundreds of similar meetings, yet the only assemblies raided were those called by the Shop Assistants' Union to agitate for higher wages. Nevertheless, we are asked to believe that the raids were mere inadvertences, and that the officers tumbled in on the meetings because of accidents! When heckled about the raids in Parliament, the Under-Secretary for War said:—

> "There is no foundation for the suggestion that these raids are instigated by employers, or are in any way directed against trade unions. In this particular case I am informed that the officer responsible was not aware that this was a trade union meeting."

What the diplomatic Under-Secretary failed to explain was how the "officer responsible" came to know of the meeting. Someone must have told him about the meeting or he could not have known to raid it, and if informed about it he must have known it was a trade union meeting. Further, it is rather curious, not to say mysterious, that the "officer responsible" should accidentally and unknowingly raid two trade union meetings occupied in pressing demands for better wages. Did the military find their way to the meetings under divine guidance? Did the union officials not inform the "officer responsible" that the meetings were trade union meetings, and in that case why did the military remain to raid if they had no intention of raiding trade unions? Imagine, if you can, the military raiding meetings without knowing under whose auspices the meetings were held. The idea is absurd, and no impartial reader will disagree with that statement. The military must have known that they were raiding trade union meetings, whatever their intentions may have been. That much is plain.

One of the raids took place at the Hairdressers' branch of the Shop Assistants' Union, and at the very hour when the members were discussing the course of action they should adopt in view of the refusal of the employers to grant an increase of 6s. per week. When the military entered the business had to be suspended until the exemption card of every man was examined and approved as in order. After the military withdrew the members decided unanimously to hand in strike notices as a protest against the action of the authorities as well as against the refusal of the employers to give the desired advance. So that Prussianism instead of quelling the strike encouraged it. Since, however, the employers have partly given way, and the need for a strike has been averted. If the workers had allowed themselves to be intimidated by the raid there would in all probability have been no advance.

Are these raids to continue on workers' meetings—they are not inflicted on meetings of employers—without one protest from the Labour Party? If the raids were due to "military necessity" we could see the force for the Labour Party's inactivity. But so far as we can gather from military dispatches the raids on the Glasgow meetings have made no impression on the German trenches. That being so, we presume the Labour Party has no reasonable excuse for silence except that the shop assistants are not included in the "exempted trades" and therefore not entitled to protection. It is only the skilled workers who are exempted and badged who must be protected against the militarism. The Labour Party will stand by the Government exempted to the last man and the last farthing. As for the shop assistants and other humble souls, they will have to protect themselves and they had better set about it without delay.

(continued from front page)

do it?" said Mrs. Drake. "Don't you think it is the only way?"

"You mustn't put such leading questions to me, I cannot answer them," said Lord Devonport.

"What prospect is there of our being able to get enough to eat in the future?" said Mrs. Drake.

Lord Devonport made a helpless gesture. He went on suavely to assure the deputation that he knew the consumer was having a very severe time and continued with a smile: "You seem to be representative, I wonder how it would be to set up a committee—if you were to come and meet here—not to kick up a row, but to advise—of course if we had a committee we should use it."

"What would be the functions of the committee? Would it be given data to go upon?

Lord Devonport could not say. One of his satellites then suggested that other organisations should also be asked to join the committee. Lord Devonport agreed. He would write to Miss Pankhurst and tell her more about it. He felt sure it would be most useful.

The deputation was not so sure about the matter. Its members were thinking that they must go from the Food Controller who has no power to the Prime Minister who has.

In the evening the deputation reported progress to another food meeting convened at 400 Old Ford Road. The meeting decided that the Prime Minister must be approached.

BOOK THE DATE!

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WHAT'S ON?
W.S.F. FIXTURES
OUTDOOR

FRIDAY, APRIL 6th.
Old Ford Road, Bonner Lane, 11.30 a.m., Mrs. Boyce.
"Peacock," Canning Town, 6 p.m., Mrs. Boyce.
SATURDAY, APRIL 7th.
"Whitehouse," Canning Town, 11.30 a.m., Miss Price.
Beckton Road, Canning Town, 6 p.m., Mrs. Boyce.
SUNDAY, APRIL 8th.
Osborn Street, 11.30 a.m., Mrs. Boyce.
"Salmon and Ball," 11.30 a.m., Mrs. Walker.
The Grove, Stratford, 11.30 a.m., Mr. Higenbottam.
Victoria Park, 3 p.m., Peace Meeting.
MONDAY, APRIL 9th.
Monier Road, Bow, 1 p.m., Mrs. Boyce, Miss Price.
TUESDAY, APRIL 10th.
Old Ford Road, Bonner Lane, 11.30 a.m., Armagh Road, Roman Road, 2.30 p.m., Mrs. Boyce and others.
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11th.
Clock Tower, Burdett Road, 11.30 a.m., Mile End Road, 2.30 p.m., Mrs. Boyce, Miss Price.
THURSDAY, APRIL 12th.
Ford Road, Roman Road, 11.30 a.m., Mrs. Boyce.
FRIDAY, APRIL 13th.
White Cross Street, 1 p.m., Mrs. Boyce.
Beckton Road, 6 p.m., Mrs. Boyce and others.
SATURDAY, APRIL 14th.
Custom House, 12 (noon), "Abbey Arms," Canning Town, 6 p.m., Mrs. Boyce, Miss Price.

"AT HOMES."

Chandos Hall, 21a Maiden Lane, off Bedford Street, Strand, W.C., Saturdays at 3.30 p.m.

April 14th—Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, "The Present Outlook"; Mr. Arthur Lewis, of the English Zionist Federation, "The Zionist Movement."

April 28th—Mrs. Bouvier, "The Present Outlook"; Mr. Philip Frankford, "Socialist Bureaux."

May 5th—Mr. G. P. Gooch, "The Future of Constantinople"; Miss M. O'Callaghan, "The Present Outlook."

May 12th—Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, "The Present Outlook"; Mrs. Cedar Paul, "Militarism and Motherhood."

May 19th—Mrs. Percy Bigland, "The Criminal Law Amendment Bill"; Miss N. Smyth, "The Present Outlook."

May 26th—Mrs. K. Outhwaite, "The Restoration of the Land"; Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, "The Present Outlook."

June 2nd—Rev. W. J. Piggott, "The U.D.C. and its Constructive Policy"; Mrs. Bouvier, "The Present Outlook."

June 9th—Mr. S. V. Bracher, "The Future of the British Empire"; Mrs. Drake, "The Present Outlook."

June 16th—Mrs. Ganley, "Children's Care"; Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, "The Present Outlook."

N.B.—On Saturday, April 21st, there will be no "At Home" at Chandos Hall, which has been engaged for that date by the London Labour Council for Adult Suffrage for a Delegates' Conference.

PUBLIC MEETINGS IN THE BOW WOMEN'S HALL, 400 OLD FORD ROAD, SUNDAYS, 7 p.m.

April 22nd—Mr. F. J. Shaw (U.D.C.), "Democracy and the Trade War." Chair, Mrs. Bouvier.

April 29th—Miss Wakefield, "The Criminal Law Amendment Bill." Chair, Mrs. Boyce.

May 6th—Mr. Fred Hughes (N.C.C.L.), "Labour and Civil Liberty." Chair, Mrs. Drake.

May 13th—Mr. E. G. Smith (League of Peace and Freedom), "Sex and Personality." Chair, Miss Sylvia Pankhurst.

May 20th—Miss Amy Haughton, B.A., "The Education We Need." Chair, Mrs. Walker.

MEMORIAL HALL
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At 8 p.m. Doors open 7.30 p.m.
JUDGE NEIL, of Chicago
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"MOTHERS' PENSIONS"
Other speakers—
Mrs. Pethick Lawrence.
Dr. Barbara Tchaykovsky
Chair: Sylvia Pankhurst

TICKETS—2s. 6d. numbered and reserved; 1s. and 6d. reserved; Gallery 3d., can be obtained from the W.S.F., 400 Old Ford Rd., Bow; The I.L.P., St. Bride's House, Salisbury Square; The B.S.P. 21a Maiden Lane, W.C.; The International Suffrage Shop, 5 Duke Street, Strand, and at the door.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

At Kingsley Hall, Bow, on Sunday next, April 8th, at 8.15 p.m., John Scurr will speak. Discussion 9.30 p.m.

All Societies are cordially invited to send in notices of forthcoming events for our "What's On" column. Fee, 1s. 6d. for twenty words and ½d. per word after.

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LONDON

BARKING.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Langford, Ailsa Craig, 97 Essex Road.

BOW.—400 Old Ford Road, E. Hon. Secretary: Miss Stevens. Branch meetings are held every second and fourth Monday. DREADNOUGHT sales week ending March 31st, 605; Miss Harriet, 349; Miss O'Brien, 125; Mrs. M. Holloway, 80; Mrs. Greer, 12; Mrs. Bouvier, 12; general, 27.

BROMLEY.—53 St. Leonard's Street. Hon. Secs.: Mrs. Lansbury, Mrs. Wood.

CANNING TOWN.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Parsons, 94 Ravenscroft Road.

CENTRAL LONDON.—Hon. Sec.: Miss Casey, 29b Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 52. Branch meeting Wednesday, April 11th, 7 p.m.

ENFIELD AND EDMONTON.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Beavis, 171 Church Street, Lower Edmonton.

LEYTON.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Hart, 73 Calderon Road. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 26.

POPLAR.—Hon. Sec.: Miss E. Lagsding, 20 Railway Street. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 105; per Mrs. Shlette, 70; general, 35.

TIDAL BASIN.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Drake, 49 Crediton Road. DREADNOUGHT sales average 36.

ST. PANCRAS.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Redgrove, B.S.P. Hall, 44 Malden Road, Kentish Town. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 13.

WILLESDEN.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Sheppard, 141 Villiers Road. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 12.

PROVINCES

BIRMINGHAM.—Hon. Sec.: Miss A. F. Boden, 10 Sandhurst Road, Moseley. Saturday, April 21st, 3 p.m., W.S.F. Conference on Mothers' Pensions. Speaker: Judge Neil. Saturday, April 21st, 8 p.m., W.S.F. and Labour Church, The Institute, Stirchley, Public Meeting. Judge Neil.

BRADFORD.—Hon. Sec.: Miss McHale, 12 Airedale College Terrace. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 26.

BRIGHOUSE.—Hon. Sec.: Miss Woodhead, Wood View, Shelf, near Halifax.

BRYNMAWR AND NANTYGLO.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Hayward, Coedcae, Garn Fack.

BURNLEY.—Hon. Sec. pro tem.; Mrs. Mortimer Holden, The Nurseries, Accrington.

CHESTER-LE-STREET.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Harrison, 14 Hilda Terrace, South Pelaw, Chester-le-Street.

CHOPWELL.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Bell, 62 Forth Street. Fortnightly meetings are to be held to discuss such books as "Woman and Economics," "Woman and Labour," etc. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 12.

CORNSAY AND QUEBEC.—Hon. Sec. pro tem.: Miss Ellis, Dundalk House, Neville's Cross. Branch meeting, Monday, at 197 High Street, Cornsay. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 36.

DONCASTER.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Kent, 32 St. Sepulchre Gate.

FERRYHILL.—Hon. Sec.: Miss Ruby Stoddart, 12 Hackworth Street, Dean Bank. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 12.

HUDDERSFIELD.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Key, Bradford Road.

LEEDS.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Hunter, 7 Sugdenfold, Armley. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 72.

LEICESTER.—Hon. Sec.: Miss Helen Bakewell, 28 Macdonald Street, Belgrave. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 13. Branch meeting, April 2nd.

MANCHESTER.—Hon. Sec.: Miss F. Wassilevski, 18 Broughton Street, N. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 26.

MEDOMSLEY.—Hon. Sec.: Tom Orr, Esq., 6 Derwent Cottages, Durham. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 24.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Hon. Sec.: Mr. Nicholson, 19 Alexandra Road, North Heaton.

PRUDHOE-ON-TYNE.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Parks, 4 Riding Terrace, Mickley Square. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 8.

PORTSMOUTH.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Clarges, 200 Westfield Road, E. Southsea. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 39. Joint Public Meeting with Trades and Labour Council and I.L.P., Trades Hall, Fratton Road, Wednesday, April 18th, 8 p.m. Judge Neil on "Mothers' Pensions"; Miss Sylvia Pankhurst. Chair, Mr. G. Roberts.

ROTHERHAM, WAKEFIELD.—Organiser: Miss Stephen, 33 Hopwood Street, Hull.

SHEFFIELD.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Manoin, 98 Gell Street. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 104. Joint Public Meeting with Trades and Labour Council, Temperance Hall, Townhead Street, Thursday, April 26th, 7.30 p.m. Judge Neil on "Mothers' Pensions"; Miss Sylvia Pankhurst. Chair, Mr. Fletcher.

SOUTHAMPTON.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Samuel 33, Mount Street. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 12.

STIRCHLEY.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. M. Henson, 85 Watford Road, King's Norton, Birmingham; Assistant Sec.: Miss Shepley.

YORK.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Hall, 43 Lowther Street.

SCOTLAND

GLASGOW.—Hon. Sec.: Lachlan Smith, Esq., 126 Bothwell Street.

FUNCTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Sunday, May 27th, 3 p.m., Bow Women's Hall, Annual Conference (1st session).

Sunday, May 27th, 7 p.m., Chandos Hall, Public Meeting.

Monday, May 28th, 3 p.m., Bow Women's Hall, Annual Conference (2nd session).

Monday, May 28th, 7 p.m., Bow Women's Hall, Social.

W.S.F. DRAW COMPETITION

The drawing of tickets for the gold watch, umbrella, alarum clock, and bound volume of the DREADNOUGHT took place at Casey's Concert. Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, who was in the chair, suggested that Casey should draw the tickets. The audience agreed, and Casey drew the following numbers:—1st, 10,331; 2nd, 672; 3rd, 671; 4th, 673. Those who hold the counterfoils should send them to the Draw Secretary, Mrs. Drake, 49 Crediton Road, Tidal Basin, E.

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Friends and members please note that this shop is open for sale of Labour, Suffrage and all kinds of reform literature. If you deal with us, you will help the funds.

DON'T STAY AWAY FROM THE NATIONAL SERVICE MEETINGS. BE THERE TO TELL THOSE PRESENT WHAT YOU THINK!

Donations to be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Dr. Tchaykovsky, or to the Hon. Financial Secretary, Miss N. L. Smyth, 400 Old Ford Road, Bow, E.
All parcels to 400 Old Ford Road, Bow, E.

GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGED

GENERAL FUND.—G. L. Tharp, Esq., £5; Irene, per Mrs. Drake (weekly), £1; Miss Friedheim (Peace Banners), 10s.; Mrs. Brimley, 1s. COLLECTIONS: L.S.A. Polishing Dept., 11s. 8½d.; Bow Baths, 7s.; Mrs. Boyce, 7s.; Mrs. Walker, 4s. 11½d.; Miss Stephen, 3s.

"DREADNOUGHT" FUND.—Per Mrs. Drake (Draw Books), £5; G. T. Jones, Esq., 14s.; A. D. (Libel), 4s.; Miss Newsome (monthly), 1s.

MILK AND GENERAL DISTRESS.—Mrs. Fox, £3; Will Crooks, Esq., M.P., £1; Nurse Hebbes (weekly), 12s.; Mrs. Richmond (fortnightly), 10s.; Five Northern Friends (monthly), 6s.; Miss C. Beatrice Chisholm, 5s.; Miss Clemence Housman, 3s.; Rathmell Wilson, Esq., 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Mason, 1s.; Mrs. Underwood, 6d. COLLECTIONS: L.S.A. Tool Room, 1 15s. 0½d.; Misses E. Lagsding and L. Barker (Green's Yard), 11s. 0½d.; Miss Mackay (Churn), 10s. 3d.; Misses K. Lagsding and T. Barker (Cubitt Town), 5s. 8½d.; Esme Lansbury (farthing collection), 4s. 1d.; Mrs. Cottrell, 2s.; Trades and Labour Club, per Mrs. Clarges, 1s. 2d.

CLOTHES, &c.—Mrs. White, Mrs. Davies, Anon, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. and Miss Tarrant, Anon, Mrs. Crosland Taylor, Mrs. Bigbee, per Mrs. Sadd Brown.

GROCERIES.—Hampstead National Food Fund.

EGGS.—Lady Margaret Sackville, Mr. Lawton.

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Health Talks for Mothers are held the first and third Fridays in the month at 3 p.m., at the Mothers' Arms.

Dental Clinic, April 4th, 2.15 p.m.

20 Railway Street, Poplar.
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Doctor's consultation and baby-weighing, Tuesdays, 2.30 p.m. Nurse may be seen at any time.

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Cost Price Restaurants at 400 Old Ford Road, and 20 Railway Street. Dinners from 12 till 2 p.m. daily.

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Broken men, discharged with insufficient pension, constantly ask our help for their wives and children. The rising price of food is causing grave distress amongst poor families. Help us to provide the milk, nourishment and necessary clothing, without which doctoring is of small avail. Send a subscription to the Treasurer of our Distress Fund, Dr. BARBARA TCHAYKOVSKY, 400 Old Ford Road, E., or a parcel to Miss NORAH SMYTH at the same address.

MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS

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